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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2009

In Today's Papers

Labor Unions and Government Reach Agreement

All papers: Mainstream Hurriyet reports the AKP government and the major labor unions for public sector workers reached an agreement in a wage raise bargain on Tuesday after Turk-Is, Turkey's largest labor unions confederation, went on a one-hour strike through out the country. The parties reached an agreement on a three percent wage increase for public workers during the first half of the year and a 5.5 percent rise during the second half of the year. For salaries lower than 1100 TL, they also agreed on an extra payment of 60 TL. Mainstream Milliyet headlines, "A One-Hour Protest And A Speedy Compromise," as "The government makes an emergency deal with workers who went on strike in 81 provinces." Extreme right Tercuman headlines, "Workers Prevail in Fight With Government."

European Partners Withdraw From Ilisu Dam Project

Milliyet, Hurriyet, Radikal, Vatan: Today's papers report that the German, Swiss and Austrian financial institutions withdrew their loan support for the Ilisu Dam; construction of the dam would flood 80 percent of the historic Hasankeyf town of Batman province. Mainstream Vatan says this development is the result of Turkey's failure to take the necessary measures to protect the antiquities and monuments of Hasankeyf that date back 10,000 years. Papers note that the European investors have pressured Turkey for years to take the necessary steps to protect Hasankeyf's historical treasures, but the investors withdrew their support from the project due to Turkey's unwillingness to heed their warnings. All papers note that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry issued a statement and reiterated the government's determination to move forward on the construction of the dam.

Editorial Commentary on Ilisu Dam

Metin Ilisu wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Foreign financiers have withdrawn from the Ilisu project and the Turkish government has lost the chance to award the project to a company without holding a tender. But Turkey ignored the standards placed on the project regarding environmental protection and funding. Now the government will have to hold a tender to use state loans to fund the project and government officials are not willing to hold tenders."

PM Erdogan Interviewed by Italian daily Corriere della Sera
Mainstream Sabah reports that prior to his visit Italy for the G-8 summit, PM Erdogan gave an interview to Italian daily Corriere della Sera on domestic and foreign politics. Responding to a question regarding the draft bill allowing military personnel to be tried by civilian courts, PM Erdogan said "There are no conflicts with the armed forces. No one wants to try soldiers on charges related to their professions." Erdogan also said that Turkey was "tired of waiting for the EU." On Armenia, the PM stressed that there wasn't a single document proving the so-called Armenian Genocide and DQQ!) cQreminded that there were still 40,000 Armenians living in Turkey.

Government Sends Report to Presidency in Support of Draft Bill
Conservative Turkiye reports the Turkish government said in a report it had sent to the Turkish president that a bill allowing civilian courts to try military personnel conformed to the constitution, citing previous rulings of the Constitutional Court as a justification. The report also said the bill was approved by the parliament by a sufficient number of deputies, rejecting any irregularities. The report underlined a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights which said that "military courts cannot act independently." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "As the civilian society wants President Gul to approve the bill, the government in a report it presented to Cankaya backed the bill which was passed by the Parliament." Meanwhile, mainstream Vatan reports in "Erdogan Insists," that in a report it sent to the Presidential Palace regarding the "midnight law", the government, unlike the army, said that the law was "not against the constitution and EU standards" and asked for its approval. The report claimed that the law was not in breach of Article 145 of the constitution and it was in line with

ANKARA 00000969 002 OF 003

EU's Accession Partnership document and progress reports.

Editorial Commentary on Domestic & Foreign Politics
Ruhat Mengi wrote in mainstream Vatan: "While the military should not interfere in politics, the military should not be portrayed as the only power that could damage democracy. Damage can come to democracy through the implementation of democracy, as we have experienced frequently in our country and the world."

Tufan Turenc wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "It's not right in diplomacy to say 'Turkey's been waiting for the EU for fifty years and Turkey is tired of it.' The PM has to be determined on the EU and should not talk in such a desperate manner. He says Turkey wants openness and consistency. But it's a pretty late warning. His comments to Italian daily Corriere della Sera clearly shows that it's not easy to jump on the EU train anymore."

UNICEF Interested in Fate of Jailed Children
Sabah gives extensive front page coverage to UNICEF's interest in children in Turkey who have been convicted and sentenced to jail on charges of throwing stones at police during demonstrations. The children have been convicted under the anti-terror code and currently, there are more than 300 children between the ages of 12 and 18 in Turkish jails. UNICEF demands details about the definition of terror and terror acts in the code by August 4.

The Border will be Opened Up for Sarkisian
Mainstream Hurriyet reports that Armenian MP Stepan Safaryan claimed that the Turkey-Armenia border would be open for a short period in October when Armenian President will travel by road to Istanbul to watch the Turkey-Armenia soccer game.

Halki Seminary Will be Opened As Vocational High School
Hurriyet says that Halki Seminary might be reopened as a "minority vocational school." A preliminary consensus has been reached on renaming the seminary "The Heybeliada Minority Vocational School" should the seminary be reopened. The school will be controlled by the Education Ministry and the students graduating from the school will receive high school diplomas.

Ethnic Clashes Between Han Chinese and "Uighur Turks" Stir Up Turkey
The violence in Xinxiang makes front-page headlines today alongside gruesome photos of corpses in the streets of Urumqi. Turks commonly

refer to the Xinxiang province as "East Turkistan" and the media reflects the public sympathies for the Muslim Turkic Uighurs' plight in China. Mainstream Milliyet reports "The tension in Xinxiang grows," as "Chinese civilians hunt Uighurs," while, "one Uighur Turk woman threw herself in front of a police vehicle, which reminded everyone of the student uprising in Tiananmen Square," and, "The Chinese are spreading terror against the Uighurs throughout the capital (Urumqi)." Mainstream Haberturk carries the front-page headline, "This Is The Uighur Tiananmen," and the paper reports, "The streets of Urumqi are filled with the bodies of the dead and remind of the Tiananmen events of 1989," and "The Uighurs want real autonomy." In, "This Time The Hans Are In The Streets for Revenge," liberal Radikal notes its not only the Chinese security forces who are clashing with the Uighurs, but now Chinese civilians are "on the hunt" for Uighurs. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines, "Horror" and the article says, "There are dead people all over the streets of Urumqi. Hundreds of women were raped and killed," and "The world just stands by and watches as the horror unfolds in China." Far right Ortadogu headlines, "The Chinese Have Begun Pillaging," as "The streets are filled with corpses." Mainstream Sabah headlines, "The Chinese Tell The Uighurs: 'We Will Exterminate You.'" Mainstream Hurriyet notes on its front page, "Most of the Uighurs who were killed were shot in the head by security forces," as "even yesterday, Chinese police behaved mercilessly toward the Uighurs."

Islamist-oriented Zaman carries the front-page headline, "The

ANKARA 00000969 003 OF 003

Tension Continues in Xinxiang (and) Ankara Is Worried," and the article notes, "despite the curfew, the protests continue," and "Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu summoned the top Chinese diplomat in Ankara to the MFA in order to express his concern over the situation in Xinxiang." Liberal Radikal also notes, "Turkey conveyed its concerns to China."

This photo appears on many front pages today depicting what mainstream Sabah calls "a Uighur Turk" who "reminded of Tiananmen when she stopped in front of a police vehicle." In Sabah, the photo appears under the headline, "The Chinese Tell The Uighurs: 'We Will Exterminate You.'"

Obama Seeks Change in Relations with Russia
Media draw some attention to U.S. President Barack Obama's speech in Moscow yesterday and his meeting with Russian PM Putin yesterday. However, the stories are mostly carried in either a straightforward or a critical manner. CNN Turk reports, "U.S. President Obama offers to scrap plans for a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe if Russia helped to stop Iran from developing a nuclear bomb." In "A Call from Obama to Russia for The Development of A Real Partnership," far right Ortadogu reports "Obama said that if Russia joins the U.S. in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and in preventing North Korea and Iran from further developing their nuclear weapons, then there would no longer be a need for U.S. missile defense installations in Eastern Europe." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports in "A Deliberate Approach to The Historic Summit," that "President Obama is positioned himself so he could highlight the historic nature of his visit to Moscow to the Russian people," but "many experts say that only small steps were taken to improve bilateral relations." Mainstream Haberturk reports in "The Ice Didn't Melt at The Caviar Breakfast," that, "Obama wanted to melt the ice with Putin but he was not successful."

Editorial Commentary on U.S.-Russia Ties
Bulent Aras wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Russia has many traps for Obama. It is not possible for President Obama to satisfy all expectations. He did that in various levels and he is welcomed with cautious optimism in Russia. It was good start, with mainly technical dimensions highlighted at the meetings. However, it was only few steps taken along a very long road."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

Q PM Erdogan said at a ceremony at the Police Academy: "Turkey is neither a police state nor a state controlled by the military. Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state that respects the rule of law."

Q A 4.5 magnitude earthquake is reported in Malatya.

Q An Ankara Court ruled that CHP leader Baykal must pay 10,000 TL to PM Erdogan for calling him a "bully "at a party rally in Sinop on February 28, 2009.

World

Q A Serbian Military fighter jet crashed at a military airport near Belgrade.

Q A Court in Germany has filed a suit against a German citizen of Turkish origin who is charged with membership in Al-Qaeda network.
"JEFFREY